

# Father Abraham

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Please consider donating to this work in the San Francisco Bay Area online at ChristChurchEastBay.org. This is a reading from Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter 3, verses 28-30, and chapter 4, verses 1-8, and 16-25.

For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too?

Yes, of Gentiles too, since there is only one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter?

If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about, but not before God. What does Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.

[ 1 : 2 6 ] Now, to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the one who does not work, but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness.

David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works. Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them. Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who have the faith of Abraham.

He is the father of us all. As it is written, Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead.

Since he was about a hundred years old, and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.

[ 3 : 0 4 ] This is why it was credited to him as righteousness. The words, It was credited to him, were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness.

For us who believe in him, who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, he was delivered over to death for our sins, and was raised to life for our justification. This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God. Good morning, everyone. My name is Andrew, and I'm one of the pastors here. All right, so last week, Jonathan, he got a little bit theological, right? He explained three important terms that Paul uses in his letter here throughout the church to Rome.

And one of those three terms is a very important concept, probably the most important concept in this letter. It's central to Paul's message, and it is the word justification. Like, if you get anything out of this sermon series, please, please, please make sure you understand the central aspect of the gospel.

You have to understand the concept of justification. Even for those of us in the room who aren't Christians and don't know if we ever will be Christians, none of us can avoid the universal relevance of this concept of justification.

[ 4 : 16 ] Because, see, no matter what God you believe in, or whether or not you believe in God at all, I don't care what you tell me, we are all seeking to be justified. Yeah, sure, maybe in various different courts of opinion, but in some way or another, we are all seeking to be justified, to be seen and declared as good and worthy and accepted by whatever court of judgment we most highly esteem.

Whether you're seeking to be accepted by some divine being, or whether we're seeking to be declared as worthy by our parents, our families, our bosses, our peers, or this or that institution, or maybe we're just seeking justification in our own eyes.

We all have some court of judgment, maybe multiple judges from whom we are seeking validation, and that satisfying stamp of approval confirming to us that we are enough.

We all live under that gaze, right? The gaze of someone or something. We're all seeking justification, a positive verdict upon our lives and our identities. And so two important questions for us to consider this morning are, who or what are we ultimately seeking to be justified by?

And then how will we be justified in their sight? You know, how we answer these questions, I believe, will change our lives. Because see, ultimately, whoever it is that you are most ultimately seeking justification from, whoever it is whose opinion and judgment you deem as carrying the highest value, the greatest weight, well, functionally, that is your Lord.

[ 5 : 45 ] Functionally, that is your God. That is your Master. We're all seeking to be justified. And then whatever Lord you do serve, however you seek to be justified by that Lord, will ultimately determine how you live, and how you relate to this Lord and to others, and how you understand what it means to be righteous and upright and noble and worthy and honorable.

Our understanding of justification, particularly who justifies us and how we are justified, these are absolutely foundational matters for all of our lives.

Are we seeking to be justified by our parents, our colleagues, our religious community, our own inner voices, or are we seeking to be justified by God? And whichever of these it is, how will we be justified in their sight?

You know, get good grades, get a good job, achieve the American dream to be justified in the eyes of my immigrant parents, or my boss, or my self-determined standards of success?

Live a moral or upright, unselfish life, sacrificing for others in order to be deemed as righteous in my, you know, holy religious community, or in the eyes of God himself. What Paul has been arguing throughout this whole letter is that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, He is the ultimate standard of justice and righteousness, the only one whose voice and verdict is true and truly matters, and He alone is worthy and able to justify us.

[ 7 : 12 ] Even when we've exchanged the truth about God for a lie, even when we've worshipped and served created things, even when we've sought ultimate justification from other lords, from mere creatures like ourselves, Paul's good news to us, His good news for us is that in Jesus Christ, God has revealed not just His mercy, not just His love, not just His grace, but His righteousness.

A way to be justified in His holy sight, accepted and honored in His own divine eyes, the only eyes that really matter, right? He has made a way for us to be justified, and not by the works of the law, but simply by faith.

And so that brings us to our text today, starting at the end of chapter 3, verse 28. Paul says, Just like he said at the beginning, right?

The righteous will live by faith, not by diligent obedience to the Torah, not by cultural assimilation into the Orthodox culture, circumcised Jewish community. No, the righteous will live, the righteous will be justified by faith, apart from works of the law.

And so what we have in chapter 4 is Paul's defense of justification by faith. And he starts his defense, as every good Christian defense should, appealing to the Scriptures.

[ 8 : 29 ] And in particular, starting in chapter 4, verse 1, he points his readers all the way back to the great patriarch of the Jewish faith, Abraham himself. He basically says, What might our forefather Abraham have to say on this matter of justification by faith?

Now remember, even in Jesus and John the Baptist's day, Abraham was the OG, all right? He was the OG, the very ancestor, right? So many religious people have claimed as their spiritual forefather, the original person that God made his covenant promise with to bless his offspring and to make him into a great nation and to bless all the nations through his family.

And this gave many Jewish people, particularly reading this letter to the church in Rome, a lot of security about their status before God. They thought that because they descended from Abraham, they were automatically justified.

They're automatically good, included into the covenant community of God. You can read about that in the Gospels, in Matthew chapter 3, in John chapter 8. The Pharisees and the religious leaders are constantly rejecting the words of Jesus and the words of John the Baptist.

Why? Because they think they're good. They think they're fine because Abraham is their father. And yet, what does John the Baptist say to the Pharisees? Do not presume, he says, do not presume to say to yourselves, we have Abraham as our father.

[ 9 : 46 ] For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Bear fruit in keeping with repentance, he tells them. So what Paul does here in Romans chapter 4 is he actually shows his readers that Abraham himself, their great forefather, was justified not by the works of the law, not by being Jewish or circumcised, but by faith.

Paul quotes here in verse 3 from the Torah, Genesis chapter 3, Genesis chapter 15, verse 6. What does Scripture say? Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness.

The Hebrew Scriptures didn't say that Abraham was justified by being obedient or hardworking or sacrificial or pious. No, Abraham believed God. He trusted what God said.

He held on to what God promised and God justified him. His faith was credited to him as righteousness, righteousness in the eyes of God. So Paul demonstrates here to his readers that the very Hebrew Scriptures have taught justification by faith all along.

You know, what I especially love about Paul's argument here is that he doesn't just point to the Scriptures and say, I've got truth on my side. I'm theologically correct. You've got it wrong because just look what it says right here in the Holy Book.

[ 11 : 04 ] Now at the very same time as he points to the truth and the logic of justification by faith and the authoritative biblical witness on his side, he also points them to the beauty, the beauty of justification by faith.

And so what I want to do with the remainder of this sermon is for us to observe this argument that Paul makes about the truth and logic of justification by faith but also the beauty of justification by faith.

And to sum that up, let me put it like this. Justification by faith transforms our gloating into gratitude, our guesses into guarantees, and our foes into family.

I'll say that again. Justification by faith transforms our gloating into gratitude, our guesses into guarantees, and our foes into family. Alright, so let's get to how does justification by faith transform our gloating into gratitude?

Look with me at chapter 4, verse 2. Paul writes, if in fact Abraham was justified by works, well then he has something to boast about but not before God.

[ 12 : 09 ] And what Paul is arguing here from verse 2 to all the way to 16 is that if justification is not by faith, if justification is by works, by diligent effort to obey, and by cultural assimilation into Jewishness, then those who are justified would have every reason to boast and to gloat about their justification.

Like even before God, they could boast that they basically justified themselves in God's sight by doing the right things themselves. But, you know, as Harvard Law professor Michael Sandel points out in his book *The Tyranny of Merit*, the more we think of ourselves as self-made and self-sufficient, the harder it actually is to learn gratitude and humility.

Because, think about it, if people are justified by the works they do, they could view God as owing them justification. Look at verse 4. Now, to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation.

See, if justification is not by faith but by the works of the law, then creatures like us could point our fingers into the heavens, right, and say, O Creator, hello, right, you're obligated to justify us because of the works we've accomplished.

You ought to reward us, you ought to congratulate us, you ought to, you owe us justification, you're obligated because look at what we have done. But now, does that sound like an appropriate posture toward our maker, toward the one who holds the world together and sustains the breath in our lungs?

[ 13 : 37 ] Does it make sense that creatures, particularly sinful creatures, might be able to gloat before God and obligate Him to do anything? No. That's why verse 2 says, but not before God.

For creatures, the gloat before their Creator is madness. It's nonsense. As the psalmist says, it is He who has made us and not we ourselves. If justification is not by faith but by works, then we would be relating to God not as grateful children before our benevolent and gracious Father, but as gloating employees before our dutiful, divine boss.

And that's what verse 4 is getting at. To the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation, a mere business transaction. If justification is by works, it is earned and not something to be grateful for.

Like really, who here, when they receive their paycheck, writes a nice thank you note to their employer? Anyone do that here? Every single time? Anyone? Heck no, right? No.

That wasn't a gift. You earned it. Your paycheck, your wages were due to you, owed to you because of your work. And also, think about how this affects your relationships, right? Your relationship with your employer.

[ 14 : 48 ] Your relationship is not based on benevolence and gifts of grace and mercy but on merit and transactional exchanges for the sake of mutual benefit, right?

Your relationship isn't primarily one of gratitude and humility but of consumeristic and capitalistic exchange. Now, I don't want to be overly critical of this kind of relationship but I do want us to consider, is this the kind of relationship we want and long for with God?

A primarily transactional relationship based on merit and performance. In verses 5 to 8, Paul shows us how justification by faith before God is so much better.

It's so much better than justification by the works of the law. Verse 5, However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies even the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness.

Paul shows not only from Genesis in the Torah but also from the Psalms that the great king David just like Abraham also understood that justification has to be by faith. Verse 6, David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works.

[ 15 : 59 ] And notice that word blessedness right there. That word blessedness. Again, when you get your paycheck, sure you might say that God blessed me with a job in the first place but you don't say my employer blessed me with a paycheck this week.

Right? That's what your employer contractually agreed to pay you contingent upon your work, contingent upon your performance. But see, if justification is by faith, we can truly call justification a blessing.

Like it's something to actually be thankful for, grateful for, not a commission that's owed to us that we might gloat about. Like, check out my commission this month. No. Here the psalmist says in verse 7, blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

Verse 8, blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never account against them. See, in justification by faith apart from works, our debts are forgiven at someone else's expense. Right?

Our sins are covered by someone else's blood. Our sin is not counted against us because the Lord has laid on his Son the iniquity of us all. Right? Put it to death on the cross.

[ 17 : 06 ] That's what he's done for us in our place. Verse 16, therefore, the promise comes by faith so that it may be by grace.

You see, justification by faith is ultimately justification by grace. And if we are justified not by our performance but by grace, the costly grace of Christ crucified for our sins when he had no sins of his own, then all boasting, all gloating is excluded.

Right? All of our gloating is transformed by justification by faith into gratitude. For those who are justified by faith in Christ, crucified for their sins, for our sins, our only boast could possibly be the cross of Christ.

And do you know what this does when we internalize justification by faith and realize that our only boast could possibly be the cross? Tim Keller said something like this.

He said, if you build your life on being justified by anything or anyone other than God, such as your colleagues, the crowds, or a romantic partner, it will distort you, it will puff you up.

[ 18 : 15 ] If you get it, it will create conflicts in this world, it will make you a slave to it. And if you ever lose it, you'll kill yourself or you'll hate yourself. There is only one kind of justification that doesn't puff up, that you cannot lose, that heals you instead of rots your soul, and that is the justification of God.

The minute you begin to understand that in Christ you have God's applause, God's praise, God's thunderous affirmation, adoration, honor, and acclamation by grace through what Christ has done, not on the basis of your performance, on the one hand, that destroys your inferiority complex forever, and on the other hand, it humbles you and drowns your pride deeper and deeper and deeper.

That's the dynamic of justification by faith. It inspires humility and confidence at the same time like nothing else. Zero reason to gloat, every reason to be grateful, that's what justification by faith does.

And get this, not only does justification by faith transform our gloating into gratitude, but also our guesses into guarantees. Look with me at verse 16 again. See, the promise comes by faith so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed.

Guaranteed. See, if justification is not by faith, then this not only excludes the possibility of grace and gratitude, but if justification wasn't by grace through faith, it also couldn't be guaranteed to us.

[ 19 : 48 ] See, the beauty of justification apart from the works of the law is that the initiative doesn't rest on me in my fallibility and in my finitude, but in the strong, mighty, and more than capable hands of our mighty God.

Like, what is a surer thing? Justifying myself through my diligent works or being justified by God by His grace through faith? Think about that for a second.

You know, throughout this series, we've been referring to Jesus' parable of the two sons, right? About that one who ran away and wasted his inheritance and the older son who worked so hard, right, for so long living obediently to his father.

And maybe you remember this line that the older son angrily shouts to his prodigal father who had just slaughtered the fattened calf for his wayward son who just returned home.

The older brother says to his father, look, these many years I have served you and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat that I might celebrate with my friends.

[ 20 : 53 ] And I want us to sympathize with this older brother here for a second. Imagine him, right? Toiling faithfully every day. He never disobeyed. Never, it says. That's amazing. It's amazing, right?

And yet he's toiling and he's toiling and yet also never knowing if he's obeyed enough, if he's performed at a high enough level. And therefore, every day, he's been guessing, guessing whether or not this might be the day that his father might just give him a young goat.

But it's always ever a guess, right? Never a guarantee and he's forever waiting because of how he understands that he will be justified in the eyes of his father. See, the older brother seeking to be justified by his works of obedience, he's unable to appreciate justification by grace through faith.

Because of his understanding of how he will be justified in the eyes of his father through his works, he had to live his whole life guessing whether he even was justified. Even justified enough to merit a young goat.

He was never sure, always guessing. You know, I wonder if maybe that's how some of us here feel today. Always guessing about our status with God or whatever is functionally our Lord and God, right?

[ 22 : 11 ] And I was counseling someone this week, probably the brightest Cal student that I've met in my time here and she described herself as having religious OCD. Never, you know, sure, never sure of her status with God.

Incredibly bright. She's read tons of religious literature seeking confirmation, always questioning whether she was right and worthy in God's eyes, whether he loved her and was truly willing to be her personal God, like whether she could call him her own and whether he actually called her his own.

And as your pastor, I know that many of you here can relate to this religious OCD because it is true none of us has clean hands. And this eats at our consciences daily, doesn't it?

But the beauty of the gospel is that our justification in the eyes of God does not depend on our own self-exertion but simply upon the firm promise of God.

We can be justified, we can be right and accepted with God simply by faith. simply by trusting what God says. We don't have to live guessing about our performance, we can live by faith in God's gracious guarantee, already paid for by Christ, our perfect older brother.

- [ 23 : 25 ] Our perfect older brother. Now we must not miss how justification by faith also affects not just our vertical relationship with God, but our horizontal relationship with one another.

Rightly understood, justification by faith also transforms our foes into family. Verse 16 again. The promise comes by faith so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring.

Listen, not only to those who are of the law or, you know, like circumcised, but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. You see, if justification is not by faith, but by works of the law, or really like by functionally becoming Jewish, right, that's what it means to engage in the works of the law, then basically every nation, tribe, people, would pretty much have to become Jewish in order to be right with God.

They would need to eat culture, all the men would need to be circumcised, and on and on according to the Torah, right? And thus the Jewish people could rightly assert and gloat about their cultural supremacy, for their national and cultural identity would be their righteousness, even giving them reason to mistreat and villainize and demonize all other cultures as inferior.

Justification by works gives us reason to gloat, reason to dominate and oppress, right, with violence. But Paul argues Abraham and his people were never actually justified, never made right with God because of who they were, because of the things they did, but only ever by faith.

- [ 25 : 02 ] It's always been by faith. Now you might have noticed we skipped over verses 9 through 15 for the sake of time, but if I could just sum that up briefly, what Paul argues there is that if you read the book of Genesis about the life of Abraham, right here you'll see that Genesis 15 is quoted by Paul in verse 3.

He quotes Genesis chapter 15 where God justifies Abraham by faith. Abraham's justification comes in chapter 15 and it comes before his circumcision which happens in chapter 17.

And it also happens like hundreds of years before Moses and the law. And so Paul is making an argument just like Jesus, just like John the Baptist that the true children of Abraham, the true children of the covenant and of God's promises, the true heirs of God are not those who share Abraham's faith.

You know, as a kindergartner in church, I remember the first time I heard the song, Father Abraham had many sons and I am one of them and so are you and I had no idea what that song was about. It made no sense to me.

No, my dad is Dennis Ong, all right? But it was because I hadn't read and understood the Apostle Paul. Verse 17, as it is written, I have made you a father of many nations He is our father in the sight of God in whom he believed.

- [ 26 : 27 ] You see, justification by faith is what God always had in mind when he promised Abraham that he would make him a great nation and a blessing to all the nations. God did not have cultural supremacy or imperialism in mind but a gift of grace.

Justification not by being Jewish but by faith in the God of Abraham. And this is the basis for Christianity really being the most diverse movement in all of history.

I recently met someone here at Christ Church who is not a Christian but fairly interested in Christianity. His family comes from Iran and he actually sent me a YouTube video recently about how Christianity is booming in Iran and how a lot of people don't know about it.

And one thing that this guy alluded to that was mentioned in this video was how Iran is unique. It's unique because it is a Muslim country but it also has its own distinct culture.

Like most Muslim countries are Arab cultures but Iran is distinct because it's a Muslim country that has a distinctly Persian culture. Like that region of Iran was Persian long before it was Muslim.

[ 27 : 31 ] But now if you know anything about Islam basically to become Muslim you pretty much have to become Arab in some way. Like according to Islam if you've read even the Quran in another language other than Arabic you haven't actually read it.

And so how that's played out in Iran or I should say in the Islamic Republic of Iran is that Islam and the Arabic culture with it have been imposed on these Persian people. And so many Iranians like increasingly more each year have found Christianity to be a faith that doesn't imperialistically oppress or culturally impose itself but rather refreshingly liberates and affirms them as Persians in a way that Shia Islam their official state religion never could do.

Many Iranians are realizing that with Christianity they can be justified and in right relationship with God not by becoming Arab or becoming Jewish but they can be justified by faith as Persians just like the Chinese just like the Nigerians and just like the Germans.

And see my point here is that justification by faith and not by adherence to Moses' Torah it's not just a powerful personal spiritual truth about you and some high God in the heavens but it has amazing potential to bring the nations together without destroying their differences either.

Justification by the one and same faith in the Lord Jesus Christ unlike anything else can transform has transformed foes into family even people from nations at war with each other for centuries.

[ 29 : 04 ] The horizontal good news of justification by faith is that this God can be your God and your super different neighbor's God at the same time even if the only thing you have in common is your faith in Christ this Christ who in his own body took down the dividing wall of hostility and bore our sins the sins of the nations against each other and nailed them to the cross and this is the beauty of justification by faith.

It transforms our gloating into gratitude our guesses into guarantees and our foes into family. Now maybe hopefully you've been convinced of the beauty of justification by faith apart from the works of the law and maybe you even want to believe it but I also recognize that for many of us both those of us who identify as Christians and those of us who don't for all of us really justification by faith might sound beautiful but I think for a lot of us it also might sound actually harder to believe than justification by works.

Maybe even too good to be true. And if that's you this morning I just want to close by begging you to consider what if justification by faith isn't too good to be true?

What if justification by faith might actually be too good to not be true? Like I get it faith is hard. Faith is hard. I've been walking with some of you for a couple years now and you're wanting to be there but you're not there.

that the faith you realize it really very much is a gift from God and you can't just muster it up in yourselves. And for those of us in the room who are Christians we have trouble believing the promises of God don't we?

[ 30 : 46 ] That we are right and righteous in the eyes of God. I get it faith is hard. Maybe even harder to believe than just trying to obey some code of law.

But don't you at least want to believe in this God of Abraham? This God that he believed in who justifies by grace through faith? This God as it says in verse 17 who gives life to the dead and calls into being the things that we're not.



Maybe you're here today and you feel like having faith is impossible for you. Like faith is that thing that will never be. Like your skepticism about God and what he says is too strong to ever be overcome.

But may I just point out to you that this is precisely the context in which we are invited to reach out to God in faith. Opening our hands to receive from this God who does the impossible, who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that we're not.

Like might it be that all our doubts are merely an occasion for God to break through and to show us that he is greater than our doubts.

[ 31 : 56 ] He is greater than our doubts. To those of us who find it impossible to trust God and his promises, Paul reminds us, verse 18, that against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations just as it had been said to him, so shall your offspring be.

This guy was a hundred years old and without an offspring, with his probably post-menopausal wife, they had no reason to believe what God said other than that God said it.

and yet he trusted that God could do the impossible. Verse 19, without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old and that Sarah's womb was also dead, yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God by trusting him, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.

And so I just want to close by asking, what is your impossible thing today? What is your impossible thing today and what if your impossible thing is merely an opportunity to bring glory to God by simply trusting him by faith?

Maybe for you your impossible thing is that God would accept and justify you after all the messed up things that you've done. But yo, look at Abraham, alright? He was a coward.

[ 33 : 24 ] He jeopardized the promise of God. He let his wife be taken by Pharaoh. Then he let his wife be taken again by another king, King Abimelech. And then he was so impatient with the promise of God, he slept with his maidservant to help God get his heir.

Then look at King David, right? He had a man killed after sleeping with that man's wife. But what do the Scriptures say? These two foolish and dishonorable men were justified not by their works but by faith, credited as righteous in God's eyes.

And as it says in verse 23, the words that was credited to him were written not for him alone but also for us. To whom God will credit righteousness for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

But again, maybe that's precisely your impossible thing, right? Just having faith at all. You just don't think it's possible for you to have this kind of faith and trust in God and in what he says.

Well, God's word to you today is that it, is that though it was unthinkable, it was unthinkable that the Son of God would die in the place of sinners. And though it was unthinkable for such sinners to be justified and clothed in the righteousness of God.

[ 34 : 44 ] and though everyone has always known that it is impossible to raise someone from the dead, God's word to you is that nothing is impossible for God.

Not even the impossibility of your faith in the face of all your doubts because as it says in verse 25, Jesus, the Son of God, was delivered over to death for our sins and raised to life for our justification.

And this is the gospel. that nothing is impossible. Neither your justification as righteous in the eyes of your maker nor the faith by which you can receive that justification.

Nothing is impossible even today if you believe, if you'll trust in Christ. This is God's gracious gift, a gracious gift from a loving Lord who gave everything to call us our own.

And that's the beauty of justification by faith from the word of God. Will you pray with me? Lord, we cannot muster up faith on our own.

[ 35 : 57 ] Some of us want to believe but we need help in our unbelief. God, would you send forth your spirit to grant us the gift of faith?

Would you give us eyes to see the beauty of justification by faith? This precious gift. We claim the promise of your son who said, ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened.

Give us that kind of a faith and make us this kind of humble and confident people marked by grace. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ poured out upon us by his sacrificial cross.

Make us a community, oh God, that is marked by justification, by faith. And use us for the good of this city, for the good of this world, we pray in the name of Jesus.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.